

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

65. (Currently amended) A method for processing microparticles to improve flowability, comprising:

(a) conditioning the microparticles to form conditioned microparticles, ~~wherein the conditioning is carried out until a flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is greater than about 60, and~~ wherein the microparticles comprise a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing;

(b) measuring a flowability index of the conditioned microparticles; and

(c) if the flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is not greater than about 60, repeating step (a) until the flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is greater than about 60.

66. (Previously presented) The method of claim 65, wherein step (a) comprises:

(i) maintaining the microparticles at a conditioning temperature for a time period of about five days or less.

67. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, wherein the conditioning temperature is from about 20°C to about 25°C.

68. (Previously presented) The method of claim 65, further comprising after step (a):

(b) processing the conditioned microparticles so that the flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is less than about 60.

69. (Previously presented)(Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein step (b) comprises:

(i) tumbling the conditioned microparticles.

70. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein step (b) comprises:

- (i) maintaining the conditioned microparticles under vacuum.

71. (Previously presented)The method of claim 68, wherein step (b) comprises:

- (i) tumbling the conditioned microparticles under vacuum.

72. (Previously presented)The method of claim 68, further comprising after step (b):

- (c) repeating step (a) so that the flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is greater than about 60.

73. (Previously presented)The method of claim 72, wherein step (c) comprises:

- (i) maintaining the conditioned microparticles at a conditioning temperature for a time period of about five days or less.

74. (Previously presented)The method of claim 73, wherein the conditioning temperature is from about 20°C to about 25°C.

75. (Previously presented)The method of claim 65, wherein each of the microparticles comprises an active agent.

76. (Previously presented)The method of claim 65, wherein the microparticles comprise microparticles which comprise an active agent.

77. (Previously presented)The method of claim 76, wherein the microparticles further comprise placebo microparticles.

78. (Previously presented)The method of claim 65, wherein each of the microparticles is a placebo microparticle.

79. (Previously presented)The method of claim 65, wherein an angle of repose of the conditioned microparticles is less than about 37°.

80. (Currently amended) A method for preparing microparticles having improved flowability, comprising:

(a) preparing an emulsion that comprises a first phase and a second phase, wherein the first phase comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing, and a solvent for the polymer;

(b) extracting the solvent from the emulsion to form microparticles; and

(c) conditioning the microparticles to form conditioned microparticles; ~~wherein the conditioning is carried out until a flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is greater than about 60;~~

(d) measuring a flowability index of the conditioned microparticles; and

(e) if the flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is not greater than about 60, then repeating step (c) until the flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is greater than about 60.

81. (Previously presented) The method of claim 80, wherein step (b) comprises:

(i) transferring the emulsion to a solvent extraction medium.

82. (Previously presented) The method of claim 80, wherein step (c) comprises:

(i) maintaining the microparticles at a conditioning temperature for a time period of about five days or less.

83. (Previously presented) The method of claim 82, wherein step (c) is carried out in a temperature-controlled chamber.

84. (Previously presented) The method of claim 82, wherein the conditioning temperature is less than a glass transition temperature (T_g) of the polymer.

85. (Previously presented) The method of claim 82, wherein the conditioning temperature is from about 20°C to about 25°C.

86. (Previously presented)The method of claim 80, wherein the first phase further comprises an active agent.

87. (Previously presented)The method of claim 86, wherein the active agent is selected from the group consisting of risperidone, 9-hydroxyrisperidone, and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

88. (Previously presented)The method of claim 87, wherein the solvent comprises benzyl alcohol and ethyl acetate.

89. (Previously presented)The method of claim 80, further comprising after step (c):

(d) processing the conditioned microparticles so that the flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is less than about 60.

90. (Previously presented)The method of claim 89, further comprising after step (d):

(e) repeating step (c) so that the flowability index of the conditioned microparticles is greater than about 60.

91. (Cancelled)

92. (Cancelled)

93. (Cancelled)

94. (Currently amended)A method for preparing microparticles having improved flowability, comprising:

(a) preparing an emulsion that comprises a first phase and a second phase, wherein the first phase comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing, and a solvent for the polymer;

(b) extracting the solvent from the emulsion to form microparticles; and

(c) ~~hardening the microparticles to form hardened microparticles, wherein the hardening is carried out until a flowability index of the hardened microparticles is greater than about 60;~~

(d) measuring a flowability index of the hardened microparticles; and

(e) if the flowability index of the hardened microparticles is not greater than about 60, then repeating step (c) until the flowability index of the hardened microparticles is greater than about 60.

95. (Previously presented)The method of claim 94, wherein step (c) is carried out until a hardness of the hardened microparticles is greater than about 0.4 MPa.

96. (Previously presented)The method of claim 94, wherein step (c) comprises:

(i) maintaining the microparticles at a conditioning temperature for a time period of about five days or less.

97. (Previously presented)The method of claim 96, wherein the conditioning temperature is less than a glass transition temperature (T_g) of the polymer.

98. (Previously presented)The method of claim 96, wherein the conditioning temperature is from about 20°C to about 25°C.

99. (Previously presented)The method of claim 94, wherein the first phase further comprises an active agent.

100. (Cancelled)

101. (Previously presented)The method of claim 65, wherein a hardness of the conditioned microparticles is greater than about 0.4 MPa.

102. (Previously presented)The method of claim 80, wherein a hardness of the conditioned microparticles is greater than about 0.4 MPa.

103. (Previously presented) A method for processing microparticles to improve flowability, comprising:

(a) selecting a conditioning temperature and a time period for processing the microparticles, wherein the time period is less than about 6 days, and wherein the microparticles comprise a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing;

(b) maintaining the microparticles at the conditioning temperature for the time period;

(c) measuring an angle of repose of the microparticles;

(d) if the angle of repose of the microparticles is not less than about 28°, adjusting the conditioning temperature and the time period so that the angle of repose of the microparticles is less than about 28°.

104. (Previously presented) The method of claim 103, wherein the conditioning temperature is from about 20°C to about 25°C.

105. (Previously presented) The method of claim 103, wherein the time period is about two days.

106. (Previously presented) The method of claim 103, wherein the time period is about five days.

107. (Previously presented) A method for processing microparticles to improve flowability, comprising:

(a) maintaining the microparticles at a conditioning temperature for a time period, wherein the time period is less than about 6 days, and wherein the microparticles comprise a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing; and

(b) wherein the conditioning temperature and the time period are determined by

- (i) maintaining a portion of the microparticles at the conditioning temperature for the time period,
- (ii) measuring an angle of repose of the microparticles, and
- (iii) if the angle of repose of the microparticles is not less than about 28°, adjusting the conditioning temperature and the time period and repeating steps (i) and (ii) until the angle of repose of the microparticles is less than about 28°.

108. (Previously presented) A method for preparing microparticles having improved flowability, comprising:

- (a) preparing an emulsion that comprises a first phase and a second phase, wherein the first phase comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing, and a solvent for the polymer;
- (b) extracting the solvent from the emulsion to form microparticles;
- (c) maintaining the microparticles at a conditioning temperature for a time period, wherein the time period is less than about 6 days; and
- (d) wherein the conditioning temperature and the time period are determined by
 - (i) maintaining a portion of the microparticles at the conditioning temperature for the time period,
 - (ii) measuring an angle of repose of the microparticles, and
 - (iii) if the angle of repose of the microparticles is not less than about 28°, adjusting the conditioning temperature and the time period and repeating steps (i) and (ii) until the angle of repose of the microparticles is less than about 28°.

109. (Previously presented) A method for preparing microparticles having improved flowability, comprising:

- (a) preparing an emulsion that comprises a first phase and a second phase, wherein the first phase comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing, and a solvent for the polymer;
- (b) extracting the solvent from the emulsion to form microparticles;
- (c) selecting a conditioning temperature and a time period for processing the microparticles, wherein the time period is less than about 6 days;
- (d) maintaining the microparticles at the conditioning temperature for the time period;
- (e) measuring an angle of repose of the microparticles;
- (f) if the angle of repose of the microparticles is not less than about 28°, adjusting the conditioning temperature and the time period so that the angle of repose of the microparticles is less than about 28°.

110. (Previously presented)The method of claim 109, wherein the conditioning temperature is less than a glass transition temperature (T_g) of the polymer.

111. (Previously presented)The method of claim 109, wherein the conditioning temperature is from about 20°C to about 25°C.

112. (Previously presented)The method of claim 109, wherein the active agent is selected from the group consisting of risperidone, 9-hydroxyrisperidone, and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

113. (Previously presented)The method of claim 112, wherein the solvent comprises benzyl alcohol and ethyl acetate.

114. (Previously presented)A method for processing microparticles to improve flowability, comprising:

- (a) determining a conditioning temperature and a time period for processing the microparticles, wherein the time period is less than about 6 days, and wherein the

microparticles comprise a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing;

(b) maintaining the microparticles at the conditioning temperature for the time period, wherein an angle of repose of the microparticles at the completion of the maintaining step is less than about 28°.

115. (Previously presented)The method of claim 114, wherein the determining step comprises:

(i) measuring an angle of repose of the microparticles;

(ii) if the angle of repose of the microparticles is not less than about 28°, adjusting the conditioning temperature and the time period so that the angle of repose of the microparticles at the completion of the maintaining step is less than about 28°.

116. (New)A method for processing microparticles to improve flowability, comprising:

(a) selecting a conditioning temperature and a time period for processing the microparticles, wherein the time period is less than about 5 days, and wherein the microparticles comprise a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing;

(b) maintaining the microparticles at the conditioning temperature for the time period;

(c) measuring a flowability index of the microparticles;

(d) if the flowability index of the microparticles is not greater than about 60, adjusting the conditioning temperature and the time period so that the flowability index of the microparticles is greater than about 60.

117. (New)A method for processing microparticles to improve flowability, comprising:

(a) determining a conditioning temperature and a time period for processing the microparticles, wherein the time period is less than about 5 days, and wherein the microparticles comprise a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(glycolic acid), poly-d,l-lactic acid, poly-l-lactic acid, and copolymers of the foregoing;

(b) maintaining the microparticles at the conditioning temperature for the time period, wherein a flowability index of the microparticles at the completion of the maintaining step is greater than about 60.

118. (New)The method of claim 117, wherein the determining step comprises:

(i) measuring a flowability index of the microparticles;

(ii) if the flowability index of the microparticles is not greater than about 60, adjusting the conditioning temperature and the time period so that the flowability index of the microparticles at the completion of the maintaining step is greater than about 60.